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Various Authors, [*Resolutions of the Brussels Congress (1868)*]⁷

Trades unions and strikes

1. That strikes are not a means to the complete emancipation of the working classes, but are frequently a necessity in the actual situation of the struggle between labour and capital.
2. That it is requisite to subject them to certain rules of organization, opportunity, and legitimacy.
3. In trades where no unions and benefit societies exist as yet, it is necessary to create them. The unions of all trades and countries must combine. In each local federation of trade societies a fund destined to support strikes ought to be established. In one word, the work undertaken by International Working Men's Association is to be continued so as to enable working men to enter the association en masse.
4. It is necessary to appoint in each locality a committee consisting of delegates of the various societies, who shall act as umpires, deciding eventually upon the advisability and legitimacy of a strike. For the rest, the different sections will, of course, in the mode of appointing these committees, follow the particular manners, habit, and laws of their respective places.

⁷ On 6 October 1868, the GC decided to publish the principal resolutions of the Congresses of Geneva (1866) and Brussels (1868). The *Resolutions of the Third Congress of the International Working Men's Association* were of fundamental importance for the IWMA. They signalled the defeat of the mutualists and, with it, the collectivist turn of the entire organization. This text first appeared in *The Bee-Hive*, between November and December 1868, and, subsequently, still in London, with the Westminster Printing Company, in February of the following year, as a booklet entitled *The International Working Men's Association. Resolutions of the Congress of Geneva, 1866, and the Congress of Brussels, 1868*. For the complete text, see GC, III: 292–8.

The effects of machinery in the hands of the capitalist class

Considering that on the one side machinery has proved a most powerful instrument of despotism and extortion in the hands of the capitalist class, and that on the other side the development of machinery creates the material conditions necessary for the superseding of the wages system by a truly social system of production;

Considering that machinery will render no real service to the working men until by a more equitable, social organization, it be put into their own possession, the Congress declares:

1. That it is only by means of cooperative associations and an organization of mutual credit that the producer can obtain possession of machinery.
2. That even in the existing state of things it is possible for working men organized in trade societies to enforce some guarantees or compensation in cases of sudden displacement by machinery. [...]

The question of education

Cognizant that it is impossible at present to organize a rational system of education, the Congress invites the different sections to establish courses of public lectures on scientific and economical subjects, and thus to remedy as much as possible the shortcomings of the education actually received by the working man. It is understood that reduction of the hours of labour is an indispensable preliminary condition of any true system of education.

Property in land, mines, railroads, & etc.

1. *In relation to mines, collieries, railways, etc.* – Considering that these great productive forces are fixed in, and occupy a large portion of the soil, the common gift of nature,

That they can only be worked by means of machinery and collective labour power,

That the machinery and the collective labour power, which today exist only for the advantage of the capitalists ought in future to benefit the whole people;

The Congress resolves:

- a. That the quarries, collieries, and other mines, as well as the railways, ought in a normal state of society to belong to the community represented by the state, a state itself subject to the laws of justice.
- b. That the quarries, collieries, and other mines, and Railways, be let by the state, not to companies of capitalists as at present, but to companies of working men bound by contract to guarantee to society the rational and scientific working of the railways, etc., at a price as nearly as possible approximate to the working expense. The same contract ought to reserve to the state the right to verify the accounts of the companies, so as to present the possibility of any reconstitution of monopolies. A second contract ought to guarantee the mutual right of each member of the companies in respect to his fellow workmen.

2. *In Relation to Agricultural Property:* – Considering that the necessities of production and the application of the known laws of agronomy require culture on a large scale, and necessitate the introduction of machinery and the organization of agricultural labour power, and that generally modern economical development tends to agriculture on a large scale;

Considering that consequently agricultural labour and property in arable soil ought to be put on the same footing as mines;

Considering that the productive properties of the soil are the prime materials of all products, the prime source of all means of production, and of all desirable things that cost no labour;

The Congress thinks that the economical development of modern society will create the social necessity of converting arable land into the common property of society, and of letting the soil on behalf of the state to agricultural companies under conditions analogous to those stated in regard to mines and railways.

3. *In Relation to Canals, Highways and Telegraphs.* – Considering that the roads and other means of communication require a common social direction, the Congress thinks they ought to remain the common property of society.

4. *In Relation to Forests.* – Considering that the abandonment of forests to private individuals causes the destruction of woods necessary for the conservation of springs, and, as a matter of course, of the good qualities of the soil, as well as the health and lives of the population, the Congress thinks that the forests ought to remain the property of society.

Reduction of the hours of labour

A resolution having been unanimously passed by the Congress of Geneva, 1866, to the effect that the legal limitation of the working day is a preliminary condition to all ulterior social improvement of the working classes, the Congress is of opinion that the time has arrived when practical effect should be given to that resolution, and that it has become the duty of all the branches to agitate that question practically in the different countries where the International Working Men's Association is established.

War and standing armies

Considering that our social institutions as well as the centralization of political power are a permanent cause of war, which can only be removed by a thorough social reform;

that the people even now can diminish the number of wars by opposing those who declare and make war;

that this concerns above all the working classes, who have almost exclusively to shed their blood;

that to do this there is a practical and legal means which can be immediately acted upon; that as the body politic could not go on for any length of time without labour, it would suffice for the working men to strike work to render war impossible;

the International Working Men's Congress recommends to all the sections, and to the members of working men's societies in particular and to the working classes in general, to cease work in case a war be declared in their country. The Congress counts upon the spirit of solidarity which animates the working men of all countries, and entertains a hope that means would not be wanting in such an emergency to support the people against their government. [...]